

**VA****U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs**

# **News Release**

Office of Public Affairs  
Media RelationsWashington, DC 20420  
(202) 461-7600  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 23, 1998

*Washington, D.C.* -- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced it would not add Viagra to its formulary, the drugs that must be available at all VA medical treatment facilities.

VA long has offered veterans a broad range of treatments for erectile dysfunction, and it will continue to offer these therapies while assessing any new approaches. However, the cost of Viagra would have a crippling effect on VA's pharmaceutical budget at anticipated levels of use.

"VA must weigh all factors when considering its benefits package," VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Kenneth W. Kizer said. "VA projects that the cost of providing Viagra could exceed \$280 million annually, which would represent more than a fifth of VA's total pharmaceutical budget."

In addition, a VA pharmacy committee recently reviewed safety issues pertinent to VA's patient population and recommended against adding Viagra to VA's formulary because of safety concerns about the product in VA's patient population. Viagra may interact with numerous medications, and its safety in patients with the kind of complex medical problems commonly experienced by the patients VA treats, has not been demonstrated, the pharmacy committee advised Dr. Kizer.

Omitting Viagra from the national formulary limits its availability but does not ban its use in VA. Where a physician at a medical center feels that there is an overwhelming therapeutic rationale to use Viagra, network officials may decide to provide the drug "off formulary," following locally established criteria.